1 **Work in pairs and discuss the questions.**

1 How do you choose your friends? Do you have the same friends from your primary school days or have you made new friends in secondary school?

2 Why do you think some friendships last a long time and why do some end?

2 **Read the text. What interesting aspect of making friends does the book review of *The Psychology of Friendship* focus on?**

PSYCHOLOGY – UNDERSTANDING OTHER PEOPLE

Book Review: *The Psychology of Friendship, Jane Palmer* ★★★★☆

This is a new book by well-known psychologist, Dr Jane Palmer, focusing on friendship. In researching the book, Dr Palmer wanted to learn more about the science behind making friends, such as what makes us get on well with some people but feel less friendly towards others.

I found her approach to how we form relationships very interesting, particularly concerning non-verbal communication. According to her research, we can immediately feel comfortable with somebody we have only just met purely based on things like body language or facial expressions. We don't have to speak to somebody to know if there is a chemistry that may lead to friendship. She quotes the Armenian psychologist, Albert Mehrabian, who suggests that the spoken word accounts for only about 7% of human communication and our tone of voice for about 38%, but 55% is actually based on how we look and act when we communicate.

I think most of us assume that we choose our friends based on factors like common personality, interests, similar backgrounds and enjoying each other's company, but this book opens up a whole new way of understanding friendship. And Dr Palmer shows us that non-verbal communication is clearly significant in making new friends.

Her research also reveals that some people have an open body language and use gesture and touch to make us feel more relaxed. Even the way a person holds themselves – their posture – can send important signals. In 1966 the American psychologist, Charles Osgood, identified seven different facial expressions – happiness, surprise, anger, fear, sadness, interest and disgust. Apparently, our brains send signals to our facial muscles to control these emotions. If we show more positive emotions, Dr Palmer suggests, we naturally appear more friendly. Does this mean that if I met somebody at a party with a nice smile, I'd have a new best friend?

Fascinatingly, *The Psychology of Friendship* gives a refreshing way of looking at a subject that we are all enthusiastic about, and I would highly recommend this book not only to students of psychology, but to anyone with an interest in friendship in general.

David Thornton, *Psychology Magazine*

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3 **Read the text again and complete the summary.**

Dr Jane Palmer is a (**1**) _____ who has written a book inspired by her interest in how we form (**2**) _____. She did a lot of (**3**) _____ to find out why we (**4**) _____ with some people, but not others. One area that her book focuses on is how the right signals from another person, such as their (**5**) _____ or facial expressions, can make us feel relaxed when we first meet without even needing to (**6**) _____ verbally. Aspects of body language, like gesture, touch and (**7**) _____ can all give an important message about how friendly another person might be. Moreover, positive facial expressions, including (**8**) _____ and interest show signs of friendliness, whereas if people show (**9**) _____ emotions, such as fear, sadness, disgust or (**10**) _____, we immediately feel less comfortable in their company and may not consider choosing them as a friend.

4 **Find words in the text that have a similar meaning to the words below.**

1 have a lot in common with

_____

2 an attraction that can result in a new relationship

_____

3 communicating without speaking is very important when it comes to friendship

_____

4 angry, afraid

_____

5 positive emotions in their facial expressions

_____

5 **Work in pairs and discuss the questions.**

1 Think of situations when you have met a new friend. How did you become friends? Do you think non-verbal communication played a part in starting your friendship? How and why?

2 In what other ways do you think psychology plays a part in how we choose our friends?

DID YOU KNOW?

- As well as helping us decide if somebody can be a friend, non-verbal communication can also help us recognise when a person isn't being honest, e.g. when a person is lying their body language will probably give the following signals: little or no eye contact, frequent nose touching, covering the mouth with a hand, moving the feet and blinking the eyes a lot.
- The word *frenemy* is now used in English to mean somebody who is both a friend and an enemy, or somebody who we don't always get on with.

PROJECT

6 **If you moved to another town or city, how would you make new friends and feel part of life in a new school? Imagine some questions you would like to ask psychologist Dr Jane Palmer about this change in your life.**

7 **Work in pairs. One of you is a psychologist and one is a student. Write a Q&A (question and answer) interview between the psychologist and the student about settling into life in the new school. Think about the following to include in the interview:**

- being the new person
- how to approach new friends
- non-verbal communication
- communication
- common interests
- participating in clubs and activities.

8 **Think about the responses of the psychologist and write your Q&A interview. Present your findings to the rest of the class.**

VOCABULARY FOCUS

account for [v]: *be or give the reason why something happens*
approach [n]: *a way of thinking about or dealing with something*
assume [v]: *believe something is true*
chemistry [n]: *an emotional relationship or an attraction between people*
disgust [n]: *a strong feeling of not liking something*
enthusiastic [adj]: *very interested or excited about something*
gesture [n]: *a movement that communicates a feeling*
non-verbal [n]: *not using words*
psychologist [n]: *an expert or specialist in psychology*
purely [adv]: *completely; the only reason*
refreshing [adj]: *new; different; exciting*
research [n, v]: *studying something in detail to find out everything there is to know on a subject*
reveal [v]: *show or tell*
signal [n]: *message; information*
significant [adj]: *important*

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